



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

News Release

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WOMAN INDICTED IN MASSIVE IMMIGRATION FRAUD SCHEME

Posing as a federal agent, woman may have fleeced thousands seeking benefits

SALT LAKE CITY – A woman suspected of posing as a federal immigration officer and defrauding migrants in four states by promising them a quick route to lawful permanent residence status in the United States, made her initial appearance in Federal Court in Florida yesterday afternoon.

Pavlina Dimovski Lopez, 46, was charged with impersonating a federal agent to falsely demand money on behalf of the United States. She was arrested yesterday morning at her Clearwater residence by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, and is currently in the custody of the U.S. Marshal, pending her extradition to Utah to face criminal charges. ICE agents in Utah also arrested another individual who may be connected to the scheme on immigration charges.

A 16-month investigation by ICE reveals that Lopez operated in California, Arizona, New York and throughout Utah. To implement her scheme, she conducted mass meetings at motels – often with people lined up to attend. Claiming that she was a government immigration agent, and displaying an official-looking credential, Lopez promised lawful permanent resident (green) cards and work authorization documents within three to six months for a fee of \$3,000 per individual. She charged the victim \$1500 at the time she filled out the application, with the balance to be paid when the benefit was granted. After filling out the applications with false or incomplete information and declining to sign her own name as the preparer, Lopez instructed her customers to put their own signatures on the applications and mail them in a pre-addressed envelope with a certified mail receipt she provided.

“False impersonation of a Federal Immigration Officer is a ruse employed to circumvent our legal immigration system,” said San Francisco ICE special agent-in-charge Charles DeMore, “and it can undermine the confidence people have in their government when information from imposters pretending to be bona fide government officials proves not to be true. ICE will continue to aggressively pursue those who would exploit immigrant communities for their own self interests.

Since the information provided on the applications Lopez prepared consistently failed to meet eligibility requirements for adjustment of status, almost none of the people who paid Lopez ever received any benefits.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.